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Health Alert Network Advisory

Kanawha-Charleston & Putnam County Health Departments

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DATE: September 11, 2015
TO: Kanawha & Putnam County Healthcare Providers
FROM: Michael Brumage, MD, MPH, FACP
Health Officer/Executive Director
RE: Outbreak of Epidemic Keratoconjunctivitis

Details of Outbreak: A cluster of cases of Epidemic Keratoconjunctivitis (EKC) has been identified in residents of Kanawha and Putnam Counties.

Reporting: Please notify Kanawha-Charleston Health Department of all cases of suspected EKC since July 29, 2015.
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Background: EKC is an acute eye infection that can cause corneal scarring. It is characterized by lacrimation, florid conjunctival injection with edema and even membrane formation, eye pain and photophobia; recovery is often prolonged. It is spread easily via fomite transmission and person-to-person contact. Adenovirus has an incubation period of 5-12 days, and the contagious period starts from late in the incubation period to two weeks after onset (prolonged viral shedding has been reported). Adenovirus has a very low infectious dose and is hardy in the environment, making the healthcare setting a common site of disease transmission.

Infection Control Guidance for Healthcare Settings: For routine infection prevention measures, please see CDC's *Guide to Infection Prevention for Outpatient Settings: Minimum Expectations for Safe Care* (<http://www.cdc.gov/HAI/settings/outpatient/outpatient-settings.html>).

Additional Guidance during Suspected Outbreaks of Healthcare-Associated EKC:

- Healthcare professionals with suspected conjunctivitis should be excluded from patient contact for at least 14 days after onset of symptoms.
- Cohort patients with suspected EKC. Designate separate sign-in sheets, pens, exam rooms, waiting areas, and examination equipment for patients with symptoms of conjunctivitis.
- Wear gloves when examining patients with eye symptoms or contacts of patients with eye symptoms, and perform proper hand hygiene before and after patient contact; do not use the same pair of gloves for more than one patient.
- During the outbreak, do not use contents from eye drop bottles for more than one patient to avoid possible contamination of medication stock bottles.
- Clean and disinfect reusable medical equipment between patients according to manufacturer's instructions (NOTE: Bleach solution is effective against Adenovirus but may not be compatible with all medical equipment. 70% Isopropyl alcohol and 3% hydrogen peroxide are not effective against EKC from adenovirus).
- Avoid tonometry except when medically necessary. Clean and disinfect tonometer tips between patients according to manufacturer's instructions.
- Clean and disinfect exam room surfaces and other high-touch areas between patients using an EPA-registered disinfectant. Ensure the product is used according to manufacturer's instructions including dilution, surface contact time etc.
- Avoid shaking hands with patients suspected of having EKC.